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DEMOCRATIC

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HEALTHY TEENAGER

GDR Celebrates Fifteenth Birthday

In October 1949, when the German Democratic Republic was founded, one of East Berlin's main thoroughfares looked like this (picture above). Today, when the Republic is celebrating its fifteenth birthday as a bustling teenager, the same street, now called "Karl-Marx-Allee", looks like this (picture below).

Before the GDR Was Born

When the Second World War ended in May 1945, Germany was completely occupied by the victorious armies of the United Nations. The nazi state had been smashed, from central government level down to the smallest village council. Everything had to start from zero.

The first few weeks were a period of improvisation. German anti-fascists, most of them released from Hitler's concentration camps and prisons, took the lead in clearing the rubble, restoring utilities, and getting food distributed.

On June 10th 1945 the Soviet occupation authorities licenced the formation of political parties in East Germany, the Soviet Occupation Zone. On June 11th the Communist Party of Germany published a ten-point programme for the future of Germany. Here are the ten points:

1. Complete liquidation of nazism.
2. Struggle against hunger.
3. Restoration of democratic rights, trade unions etc.
4. Creation of democratic self-government organs up to provincial level.
5. Protection of workers against exploitation by employers.
6. Nationalisation of property of nazi officials and war criminals.
7. Expropriation of big estates.
8. Transfer of all vital public services to local administrations.
9. Good-neighbourly relations with nations.
10. Reparation to be made for nazi damage to other countries.

Parties soon emerged — the Social Democrats, Christian Democrats and Liberal Democrats — and formed with the Communists the Anti-Fascist Bloc on the basis of this ten-point programme.

On August 2nd 1945 the Potsdam Agreement of the Big Four provided the legal basis for the democratisation of Germany and the eventual creation of a German Government on a democratic and peaceful basis. The following years were marked by the fulfillment of the Potsdam Agreement in East Germany, and the abandonment of the Agreement in West Germany.

Swift steps were taken in East Germany to put the ten-point programme into effect. In Autumn 1945 more than 7000 big estates were broken up, and a total of over half a million poor peasants received small farms of their own.

In October 1945 the Soviet Military Administration confiscated the property of arms industrialists and nazi criminals, and workers' committees in the factories combed out nazis and war criminals in the administration of the factories. (By 1947 390,478 nazis had been removed from public and private office in East Germany, far more than in any other zone.)

The main process of nationalisation of nazi-owned factories was completed in 1946 after a referendum in Saxony had shown 77.7 % of the voters in favour of expropriation.

In April 1946 the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party united in East Germany to form the Socialist Unity Party.

In September 1946 provincial elections were held throughout East Germany, producing a majority for the Socialist Unity Party in all provinces.

In the following two years great progress was made in getting industry going again, cleansing the schools of nazi influences, building a staunchly anti-fascist administration and police force, etc.

Efforts to establish some form of all-German administration were frustrated by western allied refusal to abide by the terms of the Potsdam Agreement.

In June 1948 the western allies finally split Germany into two distinct economic areas by a unilateral currency reform in the western zones. When the western currency was also introduced in West Berlin, Soviet counter-measures to prevent the wrecking of the East German economy led to the so-called "Berlin Blockade".

Central economic planning in East Germany began in July 1948, first with a Six Month Plan, and then with the Two Year Plan 1949/50 aimed at restoring 1936 levels of production.

During this period the western powers, in cooperation with the old industrialists who had never been deprived of power in West Germany, made their plans for the formation of a separate West German state, and on May 23rd the "Basic Law for the German Federal Republic" was promulgated.

At the same time the progressive forces in both East and West Germany were giving their support to the German People's Congress, which was charged with the task of working out the construction of a really democratic Germany on the basis of the Potsdam Agreement. The work of the German People's Congress in West Germany was greatly hampered by bans imposed by the western occupation authorities.

On September 7th 1949 the partitioning of Germany was made final when the German Federal Parliament convened for the first time in Bonn and elected Konrad Adenauer as Chancellor.

Faced with the fact that Germany had been split, the German People's Council, which had been elected by the German People's Congress, constituted itself in Berlin on October 7th 1949 as the Provisional People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic.

The new Germany had been born.

On October 7th 1949 the People's Council, meeting in East Berlin, re-constituted itself as the Provisional People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic. It issued a declaration stating:

"The separatist Bonn Government has the task of including West Germany in the NATO military bloc, and of turning West German youth into the mercenary troops of American imperialism. In order to fulfill this task, German fascism and militarism are openly increasing in West Germany, and ideas of revenge being revived . . ."

On October 11th, Wilhelm Pieck, veteran Communist, was elected first President of the German Democratic Republic. He asked Otto Grotewohl, former Social Democrat who in 1946 had helped to amalgamate Social Democrats and Communists in the Socialist Unity Party, to form a government.

On October 12th Otto Grotewohl presented his first cabinet to the People's Chamber. It consisted of eight members of the Socialist Unity Party, four Christian Democrats, four Liberal Democrats, one Democratic Peasant Party, one National Democratic Party, and one non-party minister.

FROM THE RUINS

One week after the formation of the German Democratic Republic, "The Times" of London commented: "It would be a mistake to believe that the new regime has no substance... Instead of pretending that it does not exist it is wiser to recognise it for what it is — one more 'People's Democracy' ... imbued with revolutionary toughness and persistence which may in the end produce results..."

The pictures in this issue give some slight idea of the results which have been produced in the GDR in the fifteen short years of its existence. Hard work and determination have turned this part of Germany into a going concern, and a very real factor in European politics.

In June 1964, Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, enunciated the "Peace Doctrine" of the German Democratic Republic:

"The recognition of the existing German frontiers would mean more security in Europe. The recognition of the equal status of the two German states, and their right to self-determination would ensure peace in Europe, and pave the way to German reunification."

(left) Unter den Linden, Berlin in 1945

(below) Unter den Linden in 1964. Berlin's most famous street, has been almost completely rebuilt. Here is the Opera Cafe, formerly a royal palace

REBUILDING

At the end of the war the industrial capacity of the eastern part of Germany, today the GDR, was almost completely shattered. Machines were retrieved from the ruins, and hungry workers got the first wheels turning again. In 1946, industrial production was only 40 per cent of the pre-war figure; when the GDR was founded in 1949 it had still reached only 87 per cent. The work of reconstruction was greatly hindered by the partitioning of Germany, which meant that traditional sources of raw materials such as the coal and iron of the Ruhr were no longer available.

Despite all difficulties, the GDR has today become one of the leading industrial nations of the world. Between 1946 and 1953, 449 factories were re-built and 569 newly constructed, and pre-war production figures were reached, after enormous efforts, by 1950.

Industrial construction during the past five years alone includes a huge extension to the Leuna chemical works, a giant power station in Lübbenau, and aluminium, chemical, transistor, TV tube, cotton spinning and paper factories.

Today industrial production is just under two and a half times what it was before the war.

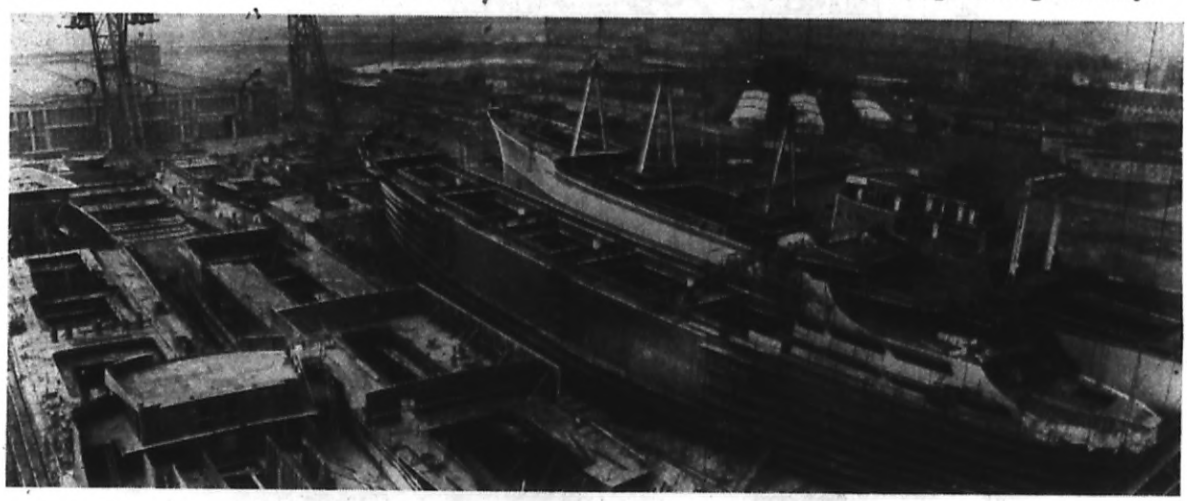
(above) Part of the huge chemical works at Leuna, as it looked after heavy war-time bombing

(below) A part of the huge, and still growing, Leuna Works today. A full panorama would spread over nearly three pages of this paper. Chemical production is one of the main branches of industry in the GDR, which ranks second in the world in its per capita output of chemical products

(above) The small shipyards of Warnemünde, on the Baltic coast, utterly destroyed in the Second World War. These shipyards could only make small coastal vessels

(below) The huge Warnowwerft shipyards today, with a 10,000 ton freighter on the slips

Other shipyards in Wismar, Wolgast, Rostock and Stralsund have been expanded and modernised. The GDR now builds passenger liners up to 19,000 tons and many types of freighters and fishing vessels for its own use and for export. It ranks sixth in the world in the shipbuilding industry.



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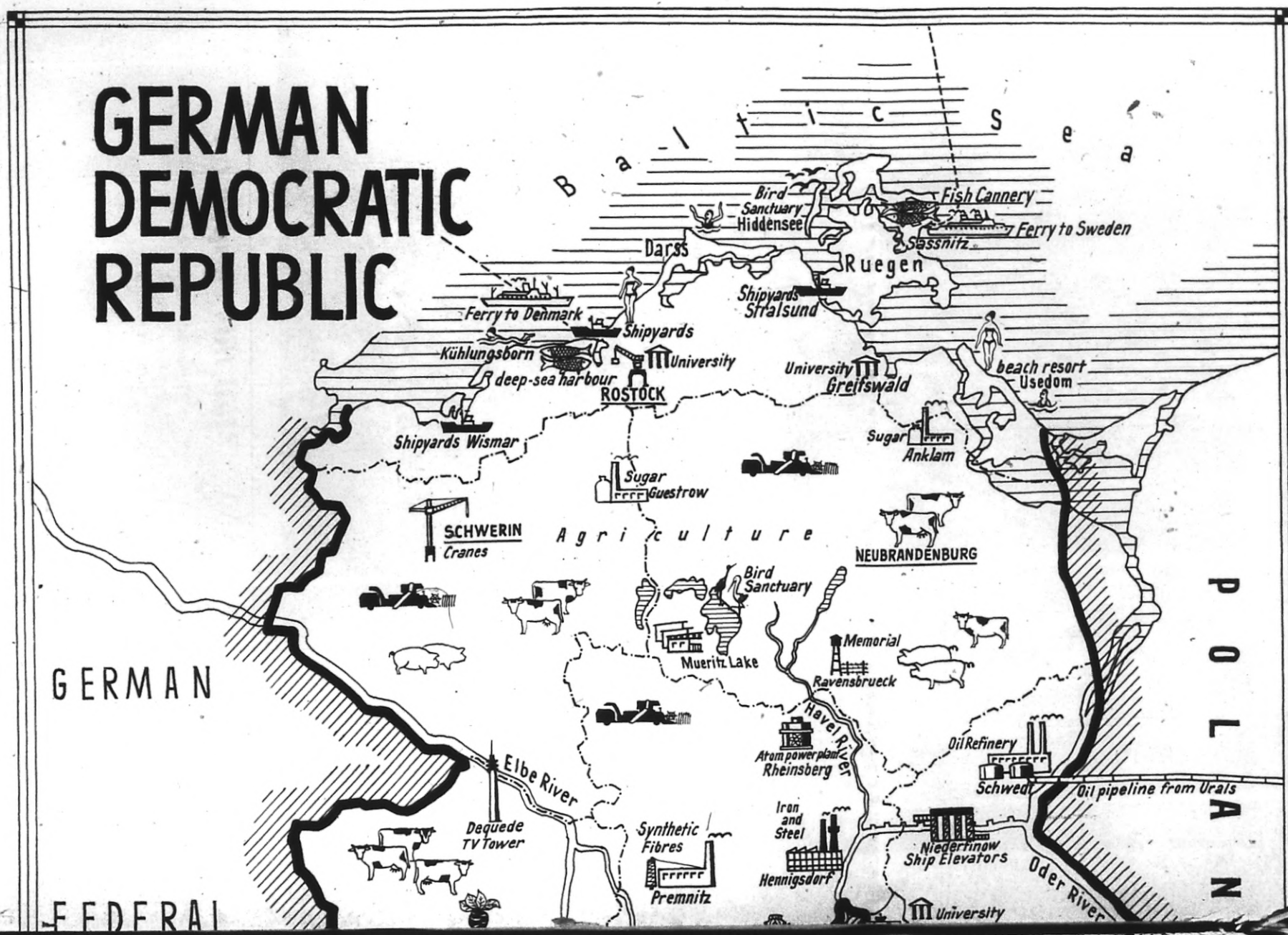
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Sassnitz
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Ruegen
Shipyards Stralsund
Ferry to Denmark
Shipyards
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University
deep-sea harbour
ROSTOCK
University Greifswald
beach resort Usedom
Shipyards Wismar
Sugar Anklam
Sugar Guestrow
SCHWERIN
Cranes
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NEUBRANDENBURG
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Lignite
Coke
Lauchhammer
Traffendorf
Black Pump
Hoyerswerda
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Riesa
Groeditz
Nordhausen
potash
Soemmerda
Univ.
Trade fair
LEIPZIG
Sport Inst.
Boehlen
Lignite
Iron and Steel
Saale R.
Car Factory
Eisenach
Flowers
ERFURT
Weimar
Memorial Buchenwald
Zeiss Works Jena
University
GERA
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Zschopau
Atomic Reactor Rossendorf
Institute of Technology
DRESDEN
Niedersedlitz
Glashuette
Power plant
Berzdorf
SUHL
Toys
Sonneberg
Saale Dam
Poehl Dam
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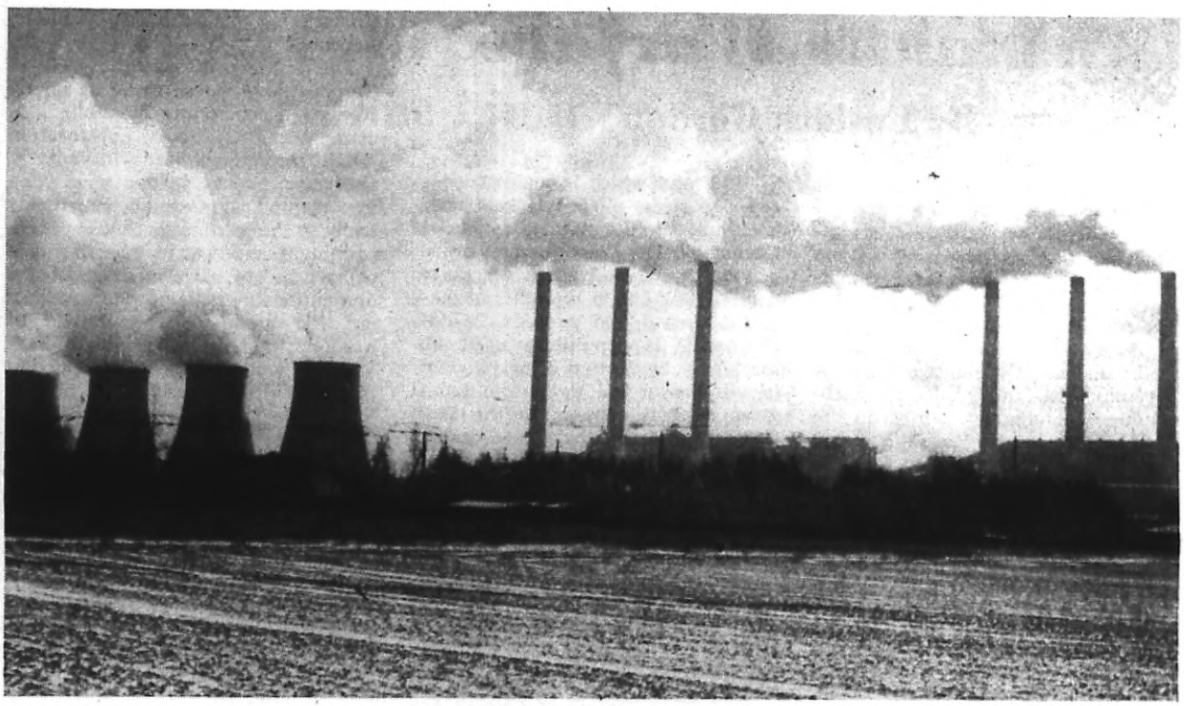
NEW WORKS

Completely new industrial centres, cut out of forest and heath land, supply new needs, especially in the chemical field.

The supply of important industrial consumer goods has increased steadily; only 5 per cent of GDR households had television sets in 1958, whereas about two-fifths now have them, only 2 per cent had refrigerators or washing machines in 1958, while about one sixth now have refrigerators and nearly one-fifth have washing machines.

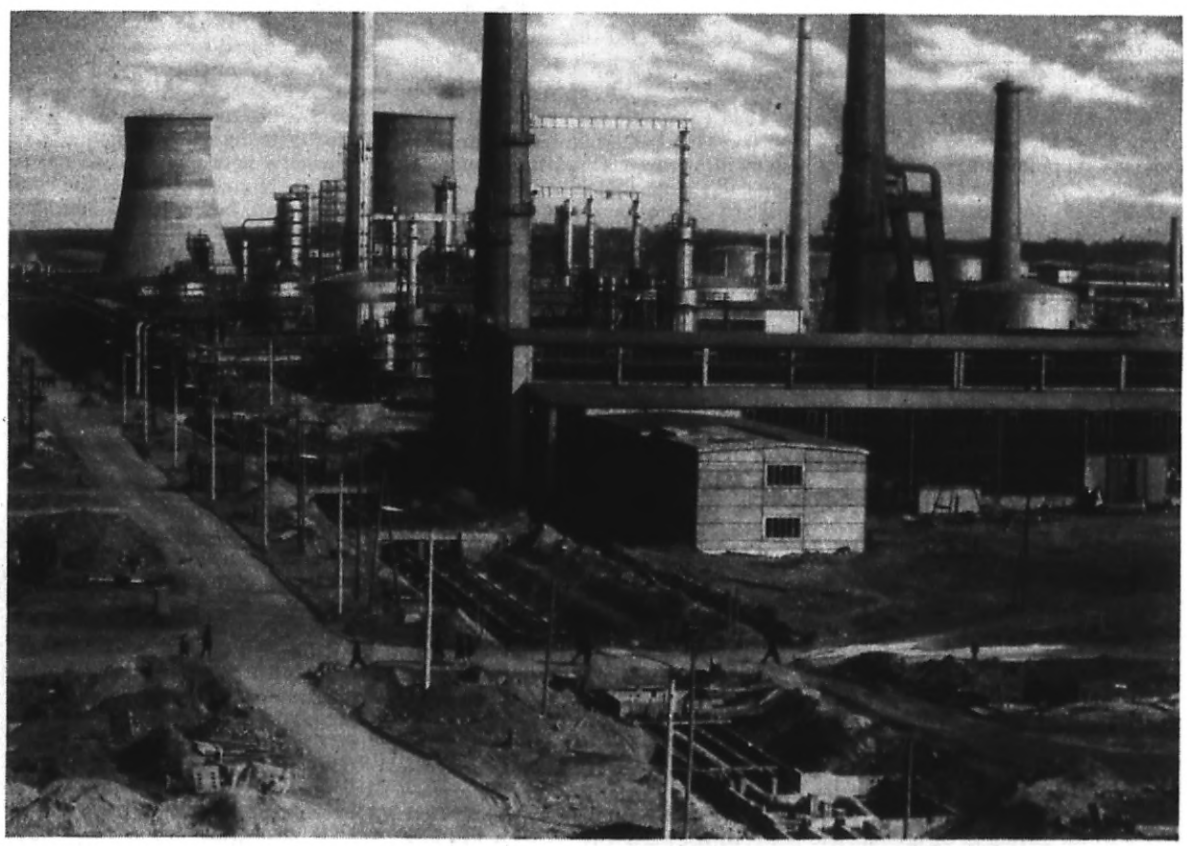
(left) Felling trees a few years ago to make room for the great new chemical works at Schwedt on the Oder river. There were similar scenes in the empty spaces now filled by the new cities and factories shown on these two pages

(below) Part of the thriving new city of Eisenhüttenstadt, first socialist city in the GDR, which houses the workers of the great new steel combine on the Oder River



(above) A new skyline in the open country south east of Berlin. The great new power plant is stoked with coal from "Schwarze Pumpe", huge newly developed lignite mine with the associated industries. The GDR is the world's largest producer of lignite, or soft-coal

(below) The chemical works at Schwedt, now nearing completion. This industrial giant is situated on the Oder River, at the western terminal of the oil pipe-line from the Soviet Union which will provide the raw material for thousands of chemical products



Semantic Warfare

By Eustace Gordon

The clash of policy and opinion in the two parts of Germany since the Second World War has been accompanied, and often sharpened, by a "semantic war", a clash of terminology.

Even this simple opening sentence provides material for this often bitter clash: instead of "the two parts of Germany", a fairly neutral geographic denomination, purists in the German Democratic Republic would prefer the phrase "the two German states", since this emphasises the equal statehood of the two parts; and purists in the German Federal Republic would claim that there are not two parts of Germany, but really three: the German Federal Republic, "Middle Germany" as they call the GDR, and "East Germany" the name which they reserve for former German territories east of the Oder-Neisse today forming parts of Poland and the Soviet Union.

This particular point has been the main battleground for the Cold War semanticists, particularly in West Germany. (For the purposes of this article, to get things quite clear, "West Germany" shall mean the German Federal Republic, that part of the country which formed the British, US and French Zones of occupation immediately after the war; "East Germany" shall mean the German Democratic Republic, that part of the country which formed the Soviet Zone of occupation immediately after the war).

Until 1949, the situation was moderately clear; the various parts of the country were generally referred to throughout Germany by the names of the occupation zones, with the addition of the names "Bi-Zone" and "Tri-Zone" for the amalgamations progressing in the western part of the country.

After the establishment of two German states in 1949, the terminological war hotted up. East Germany, after a short period of referring to West Germany as "the West-Zonal state" soon decided to accept the facts, and for many years now general usage has been "West Germany", or in more formal documents the full name "German Federal Republic".

West Germany has been far more stubborn. Official usage, maintained in all documents, declarations, schoolbooks, and in the vast majority of newspapers, is to call East Germany either "the Soviet Zone", abbreviation to "SBZ", or simply "the Zone" (a name which ceased to be appropriate in 1949, and which is maintained in order to stress alleged lack of statehood and satellite status); or "Middle Germany". The West German propagandists have had some success in popularising one or the other of these names abroad, and the term "Middle Germany" is sometimes used unthinkingly by foreign correspondents in Bonn who fail to realise that it gives explicit support to the West German theory that the eastern frontiers of Germany are not fixed, and should be revised to include a large area of Poland.

On the whole, however, this war of state-names has remained an internal German clash, and most English-language newspapers appear to have settled for the clear and neutral practice of referring simply to "West Germany" and "East Germany". "The Times" of London has taken refuge in an interesting typographical distinction: it calls the two states "east Germany" and "west Germany" with lower case letters instead of capitals. The apparent aim is to stress that the points of the compass are purely adjectival, and not part of a title. Curiously enough, Printing House Square only applies its typographical ingenuity to the European scene: North and South Korea, and North and South Vietnam all rate capitals.

The West German side in the semantic war has had more success on the international scene with regard to the names of the capitals. The governments of the two German states were established in 1949 in Bonn and East Berlin. West German propagandists were terrified that the government of East Germany might become known as "the Berlin government", with the natural kudos which this would entail as compared with the little town of Bonn; and some unidentified genius decided to christen it the "Pankow government", after the East Berlin district in which the President had his official residence. It was a brilliant selection: "Pankow" is a short and memorable word, and at least for German ears has a slightly comic and Slavonic tone which fitted exactly the picture which the Bonn propagandists wished to conjure up. The man who invented "Pankow" had his greatest success in 1952, when the United Nations invited representatives of the two German states to address a UN meeting in Paris: the official invitation to East Germany was addressed by bamboozled UN officials to "The Government of the GDR, Pankow, Germany."

The anxiety of conformist West German newspapers to avoid saying "German Democratic Republic", or using the German abbreviation "DDR" sometimes leads to remarkable contortions, particularly when important East German statements have to be recorded. Some papers confine themselves to inserting "so-called" before each mention of the unmentionable name; others simply put the name or the initials in brackets; and yet others go through a whole long document like puritan block-makers re-touching the nipples off female breasts, and replace each dangerous "DDR" with one of the chemically-cleansed and officially-approved alternatives.

The contortions are not all on one side; when East German newspapers reprint a West German speech or newspaper comment containing the invidious words, they often insert carefully in brackets the name which they prefer, although every reader knows unaided exactly what is meant. The finished product then looks like this: "Chancellor Erhard stated: 'The Pankow Government (meaning the Government of the GDR, ed.) and all the population of Middle Germany (meaning the people of the GDR, ed.)...'."

The semantic war has not been confined to newspaper diatribes and sub-editors' headaches, however. It has proved a real hindrance in reaching limited agreements between the two parts of Germany in various fields. In the trade field clever men on both sides found a way round the difficulty many years ago; the trade agreements between the two halves of Germany do not refer to the state names at all, but speak of "the currency area of the German Mark of the German Federal Bank" (that is to say West Germany), and "the currency area of the German Mark of the German Note Bank" (that is to say East Germany).

But on the question of an agreement for the issue of passes for West Berliners to visit their relatives in East Berlin, the question of nomenclature has been one of the main stumbling blocks. When a short-term agreement was originally signed just before Christmas 1963, the negotiators thought that they had made a break-through on the semantic front; the two partners to the agreement described themselves by their own official titles throughout, and then added a sentence: "Both sides state that it was impossible to reach agreement on place names and title."

This appeared to have got round the difficulty, but the West German Government was deeply shocked, and

(cont. at foot of next page)

GDR HUNTS NAZI CRIMINALS

No Time-Limit on Prosecutions

The German Democratic Republic will continue to seek out and prosecute nazi criminals, despite the "Statute of Limitations" of the German Criminal Code which sets a twenty year limit on prosecution for murder.

On September 1st the People's Chamber of the GDR passed a special law suspending this Statute of Limitations in the case of persons who committed, ordered or were accomplices in crimes against peace, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, between January 30th 1933, when Hitler came to power, and May 8th 1945 when the war ended.

In West Germany all war crimes prosecutions will end on May 8th 1965, in accordance with the twenty-year rule. The West German authorities have refused to make a special exception for nazi crimes, although the ruling will enable many thousands of nazi criminals to go scot free.

Introducing the special law in the People's Chamber, Hilde Benjamin, Minister of Justice of the GDR, stated that nazi crimes fell in quite a different category from ordinary murders, for which the twenty-year rule would continue to apply. The Potsdam Agreement and other international agreements had made nazi crimes a subject of international law, and national law could not apply.

The GDR had taken all possible measures to deal with nazi criminals in its territory, the Minister of Justice stated. A total of 12,807 Germans guilty of crimes against humanity and war crimes had been sentenced since the war by German courts in the present territory of the GDR, and GDR courts were still dealing with any criminals still located today.

West Germany had passed 5513 sentences for nazi crimes, but this figure was only a very small proportion of the criminals at large in West Germany today. (Most nazi criminals moved from East to West Germany, where they felt safer, soon after the war, ed.). Minister Hilde Benjamin quoted a recent statement by Dr Robert Kempner, deputy US prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trial, that only about one-seventh of the war criminals had hitherto been dealt with; the other six-sevenths, including many of the main criminals, were waiting for the twenty-year rule to come into effect.

The GDR Minister of Justice pointed out that West Germany was not only preparing to cease prosecuting nazi crimes next year, but that leading West German politicians were agitating for a general amnesty for criminals now in prison.

In order to deal with the question of nazi criminals once and for all, Minister Hilde Benjamin suggested that the Justice Ministries of both German states should establish a joint commission to study all the material available, and to take appropriate action.

A spokesman of the West German Ministry of Justice stated that there was no intention of joining with the GDR in the work of such a commission.

NEW GDR "COOL-OFF" PROPOSALS

The two German states could do much to "cool-off" the German problem by making parallel but separate declarations renouncing nuclear weapons, and taking steps to reduce their military budgets, Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, proposed on September 1st. Chairman Ulbricht was addressing the People's Chamber, the parliament of the GDR, on the 25th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War.

Walter Ulbricht suggested that the two German states should take at least some first steps to relax tension; since the West German Government was not yet ready to negotiate on steps towards peace and a solution of the German problem, it should be possible to create a more favourable atmosphere if each of them individually took similar unilateral measures.

He proposed that such measures could include:

1. Separate declarations by the two German states to reject the possession, production, testing or stationing of nuclear weapons.

2. An application by each of the two German states to the signatories of the Potsdam Agreement to declare the whole of Germany an atom-free zone, and to withdraw any nuclear weapons stationed in Germany.

3. Both German states should considerably reduce their military budgets, devoting the money saved to social purposes and aid for the development countries.

"Such steps would naturally not exhaust the steps which could be taken for relaxation" Walter Ulbricht stated. Further measures could include the following:

a. The two German states would solemnly reject the use of force.

b. The two German states would urge NATO and the Warsaw Pact states to conclude a non-aggression agreement.

c. The two German states would support the Polish proposal for freezing nuclear arms in central Europe.

d. The two German states would declare their readiness to accept international control on German territory to supervise disarmament measures; the control body should be composed of representatives of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

"Nobody would lose anything by such measures, but the German people and the people of the world would gain", Walter Ulbricht stated.

In the course of his speech, which stressed that the German people had a special obligation to do all they could to prevent a new war, since the First and Second World Wars had had their starting points in Germany, Walter Ulbricht surveyed German history since the end of the Second World War. The Potsdam Agreement of 1945 had been fulfilled in the eastern part of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, but not in West Germany.

"Our consistent fulfillment of the Potsdam Agreement in the GDR gives us the right to claim for the GDR full partnership in international institutions, including acceptance in the United Nations", Chairman Ulbricht stated. "The German Democratic Republic is striving to establish peaceful and normal relations with all the states of the Anti-Hitler coalition, and with all other states."

(cont. from previous page)

imposed a ban upon such a pragmatic settlement of the question. When this issue of GERMAN REPORT went to press, negotiations on a renewal of the agreement were still deadlocked over three naughty words: "German Democratic Republic".

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

In connection with the 15th birthday of the GDR I have been back at one of my favourite operations, digging through the files of old newspapers. This time I took the "Berliner Zeitung", one of the most popular East Berlin newspapers, for the later part of 1949, just before the founding of the German Democratic Republic on October 7th. I was not looking for the big political events on the front page, but for the small news items and advertisements on the inside pages, which very often throw a more unprejudiced light on the way people live than the leading articles and the big headlines. And at the same time I took a pile of recent issues of the "Berliner Zeitung" to see how things have changed since the difficult days of 15 years ago.

Since the papers, both of 1949 and 1964, were covering the holiday season, I searched for news items and advertisements about holiday possibilities. 1949 proved to be almost a blank; things were still very tough in those days, and people were thinking more about getting enough to eat than going on holidays. All I could find were a few references to steamer trips on the lakes which surround Berlin; there were no advertisements even for holidays on the Baltic Coast. Today the horizon has widened mightily; advertisements offer GDR citizens trips to the Black Sea coast of Rumania and Bulgaria; autumn winetasting visits to the vineyards of Hungary; cruises on the Volga; and as pretty exotic and rather expensive alternatives, plane trips to China, North Vietnam and Cuba.

All this would have seemed pretty impossible back in 1949; every day in those days, the "Berliner Zeitung" ran short news items reporting that one, two, or three thousand more German POWs had returned from the Soviet Union; long columns of legal announcements of the presumed decease of soldiers and civilians missing at the front or believed killed in air-raids. This was still a very big subject at that time, only four years after the end of the war: on September 7th 1949 the "Berliner Zeitung" devoted almost half a page to explaining new regulations on how to make formal application to have missing relatives declared dead.

And the yellowing pages of the old newspapers (they are yellowing rapidly: the paper quality used was very poor) contain a lot of other notes about problems which now seem to be far off in the distant past. On September 6th 1949, there was a shrill note of jubilation in an announcement in the newspapers: "Large supplies of window glass have now arrived in almost all districts of the Soviet Sector of Berlin; now we can start to remove cardboard and boards from the windows, and replace them with glass."

The fact that a factory in East Germany had begun to make chocolate again (real chocolate) was subject enough for a special news item on September 4th; but food was still very short indeed. Repeated news items and comments deal with the fact that in some areas of East Germany the slim meat rations had not been met for months; the hungry customers had been fobbed off with cottage cheese instead. Almost all other goods were short too; on September 4th a reader appealed desperately for shaving soap to be issued on the scanty soap ration. A few days later, the authorities announced proudly that the soap ration would be increased from less than one ounce per month to nearly two ounces; I remember the unlatherable soap which was issued on the ration in those days, and doubt whether the increase will have been much help to the man with the beard.

The 1949 issues of the "Berliner Zeitung" are a constant reminder of how difficult life was for everyone. The system of "off-the-ration" stores, where people could buy extra food at "free" prices was just getting into swing, and on September 13th a note was published offering food parcels from such a store. The 50 mark parcel contained a pound of flour, a pound of sugar, a pound of jam, and a couple of other minor odds and ends. Today, in 1964, exactly the same selection, undoubtedly in better quality, costs just one-fifth of the sum, and expressed in terms of hourly wage-rates only one-tenth of the sum.

In international trade, the GDR (or to be more exact "the Soviet Zone") was just beginning to take the first faltering steps. On September 10th 1949 "Berliner Zeitung" proudly proclaimed that the Leipzig Autumn Fair had produced export and import agreements to a total value of 24 million dollars; the Leipzig Autumn Fair of 1963 was astronomically further ahead, with trade agreements totalling over 750 million dollars.

Although I personally have been reporting events from Berlin since soon after the end of the Second World War, I found that the old newspaper files reminded me of odd facts that I had completely forgotten, and most readers have probably never heard of. Who remembers today the "war of the postage stamps" between East and West Berlin, for instance? For reasons which escape me, the postal authorities in both parts of Berlin decided they did not like the stamps issued in the other half of the city, and the addressee had to pay double fees, just as if the letter had been unstamped. Reporting the end of this letter-writer's nightmare, the "Berliner Zeitung" of September 16th 1949 commented with a sigh: "Our joy is not untinged with sorrow. The 'armistice' in this war had to be ordered by the Allied Commandants. Would it not have been better if the German authorities concerned could have settled their differences themselves?"

And let me conclude this short round-up with another old news item which I had forgotten all about. On September 13th 1949 "Berliner Zeitung" reported that the British, American, French und Soviet city commandants had met the previous day. The report states: "The commandants recommended the German representatives of the East Sector and the West Sectors of Berlin to negotiate on questions important for the normalisation of life in the city."

The proposal came to nothing, owing to the opposition of West Berlin politicians. And today, fifteen years later, when the German Democratic Republic suggests that the authorities in the two German states should come together to negotiate on questions important for the normalisation of relations between these states, no progress can be made because of the refusal of the West German politicians.

* * *

With a colleague I was discussing how to avoid a dull "Happy Birthday" headline on this issue. He said: "Why not run a big headline 'DUKE OF EDINBURGH GREETS GDR' followed by a story that a certain Mr Duke of Edinburgh has sent birthday congratulations." Unhappily I know nobody of that name in Edinburgh.

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